

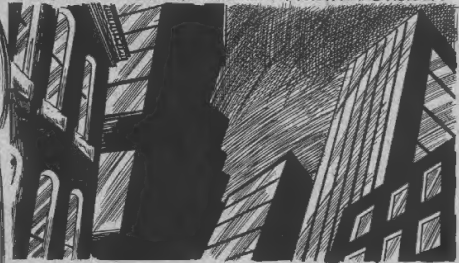
DON'T STAND THERE GETTING WET...FRET SET! HOP INTO MY HORROR HEARSE WITH THE REST OF THE GORE HORDE AND I'LL JOIN YOU ON YOUR JARRING JOURNEY. BUT DON'T LET OUR DESTINATION WORRY YOU...WE'RE TAKING A...

# ROUND TRIP

NIGHT STRETCHED IN FADED SHADOWS ACROSS THE SLICK, DESERTED STREETS...SHATTERING THE SILENT MASK OF EVENING WITH A SUDDEN TIN CAN CLANGING, THE CITY WAS FALLING ASLEEP.

HERE AND THERE, MIDNIGHT PEOPLE PUNCTUATED THE SAGGING DARKNESS WITH THEIR LAUGHTER...VANISHING QUICKLY INTO THE MELTING NEONS. A SOFT DRIZZLE BEGAN FALLING...

...AND ONLY THE DANCING GLIMMER OF A TAXI'S HEADLIGHTS HINTED THAT TIME HAD NOT STOPPED ALTOGETHER. FOR HARRY, THE NIGHT WAS JUST BEGINNING.



HE LISTENED TO THE RAIN CHATTERING IDLY AGAINST THE WINDSHIELD, WONDERING WHAT STRANGE LESSONS HE WOULD LEARN TONIGHT, FROM PASSENGERS HE'D MEET ON THE WAY.



BUT  
HIGH SOCIETY  
WAS A DAYDREAM HARRY  
COULD ONLY PRETEND TO PLAY...ONCE  
IN A WHILE. FOR THAT LITTLE OLD LADY...

A  
STIFFLED  
CHUCKLE TUMBLED FROM  
HIS LIPS AS HE REMINDED  
HIMSELF THAT THE SQUEAK-  
ING WIPERS ACROSS THE  
GLASS, SOUNDED JUST A  
BIT LIKE THE SHRILL  
LITTLE WOMAN HE'D  
PICKED UP A FEW  
NIGHTS AGO.

SHE'D RE-  
MINISCED ABOUT A PARTY  
HER FRIENDS HAD INVITED HER  
TO. HARRY'D NOTICED SHE WAS  
DRUNK. ONLY ROYALTY HAD  
BEEN THERE, VERY ELEGANT  
...MOST FORMAL.

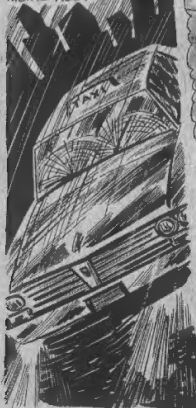


THE  
DELUSIONS WERE  
STILL REAL. TOO REAL TO  
EVER FORGET, EVEN NOW AS SHE  
STUMBLED TOWARD THE DECAYED  
REMINDER THE SLUMS OF HER LIFE  
HAD LEFT HER.

LADY...HEY LADY,  
WAKE UP!  
YOU'RE HOME.



HARRY  
COULD ONLY SHAKE  
HIS HEAD IN PITY!



STRANGE HOW PEOPLE EXISTED THROUGH THE MOMENTS OF THEIR LIVES. EVEN NOW IN THE SUDDEN POUR OF RAIN...THEY SWIFTLY VANISHED AS THOUGH THE WATER WOULD SOMEHOW SHRINK THEM.



OH WELL...I FEEL  
A LONG COFFEE  
BREAK COMING ON...  
**HEY...WATCH  
OUT!**

IT'S REALLY COMING  
DOWN MISTER...I DIDN'T  
EVEN SEE YOU! WHERE  
TO...?

I MUST MEET SOMEONE  
VERY SOON...DRIVE ALONG  
THE RIVER AND I'LL TELL  
YOU THE PLACE.

WHATEVER YOU  
SAY...BUDDY.

IT FIGURES! FIRST FARE  
ALL NIGHT AND WHAT  
HAPPENS...I GET A  
MYSTERY MAN!

O Ooops...THERE WENT  
HIS IMAGINATION AGAIN! HARRY SUDDENLY RECALLED  
THE BLUNDER OF HIS LAST ADVENTURE...OH YES  
NOW HE REMEMBERED.

IT WAS ANOTHER COLD NIGHT IN SEPTEMBER...THE AVENUE WAS BUSTLING WITH THOSE LAST MOMENTS OF NOISE, JUST BEFORE THE HOLLOW HOURS OF DARKNESS WOULD STIFLE THEM.

HARRY HAD ALMOST DECIDED TO LET THIS FARE GO BY...BUT THEN FOR SOME UNEXPLAINED REASON...

AND LIKE THE COUNTLESS COMMUTERS BEFORE THIS ONE, HARRY WONDERED IF THAT TRAIN WAS TAKING HIS PASSENGER TOWARD SOMEPLACE...OR AWAY FROM IT.

I'M IN A HURRY...PLEASE GET TO THE MIDTOWN STATION AT ONCE. MY TRAIN LEAVES IN A FEW MINUTES!

OKAY, MAC!

EACH RIDER A DIFFERENT CHAPTER. SOME TRAGIC, SOME FUNNY...AND SOME QUITE UNEXPECTED!

I HOPE I DIDN'T MAKE YOU NERVOUS, RUSHING YOU LIKE THAT DRIVER. I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN...

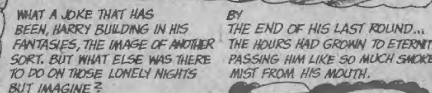
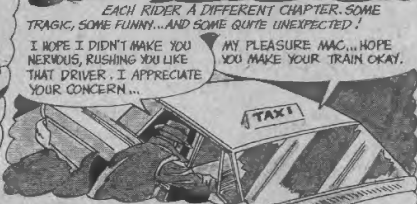
MY PLEASURE MAC...HOPE YOU MAKE YOUR TRAIN OKAY.

WHAT A JOKE THAT HAS BEEN, HARRY BUILDING IN HIS FANTASIES, THE IMAGE OF ANOTHER SORT. BUT WHAT ELSE WAS THERE TO DO ON THOSE LONELY NIGHTS BUT IMAGINE?

THANKYOU SON...I'M SURE I WILL. GOODNIGHT...

BY THE END OF HIS LAST ROUND... THE HOURS HAD GROWN TO ETERNITY, PASSING HIM LIKE SO MUCH SMOKE MIST FROM HIS MOUTH.

GOODNIGHT... SIR.



SLOW DOWN NEAR THE CORNER...HARRY,  
THIS IS WHERE THE ACCIDENT WILL HAPPEN!

MUH...WHAT ACCIDENT?  
SAY WHAT IS THIS MAC  
...SOME KIND OF JOKE?  
WHO ARE YOU?


JUST A PASSENGER  
HARRY...YOUR LAST  
ONE!

I REALLY  
ENJOYED  
THE TRIP!


AAAAAA

SOMEWHERE A VOICE VIBRATING AGAINST HIS SHATTERED  
SENSES...HARRY UNDERSTOOD! IT WAS **DEATH**...  
CALLING FOR THE CAB! WAS THIS THEN TO BE HIS RIDE,  
**FOREVER?** SOMETHING COLD TOUCHED HARRY'S  
SHOULDER...  
SOMETHING  
DEATHLY...






HARRY... WAKE UP! HEY...  
ARE YOU ON DUTY OR NOT?  
I'M GETTING SOAKED  
STANDING OUT IN  
THIS RAIN.



MUM... ON SURE. I GUESS  
I DOZED OFF. HOP IN MAC  
... I'M **ALWAYS** ON DUTY!




HARRY DOESN'T HAVE TO BE  
TOLD THE DESTINATION... HE  
KNOWS WHERE HIS RIDER IS  
GOING. SOMEWHERE ABOVE THE  
CITY, THE WAIL OF AN AMBULANCE  
PIERCES THE SOLID SLUMBER  
OF THE NIGHT.


FOR  
HARRY THE DAY IS  
JUST BEGINNING. A DAY THAT  
WILL NEVER END ....

STRANGE UNEARTHLY THINGS CAN  
BE SEEN HAPPENING IN THIS CITY...  
SECONDS THAT TICK INTO TIME'S  
INFINITY. STRANGER STILL ARE THE  
THINGS NO ONE SEES... **BUT THE**

**DEAD!**



ACROSS THE  
GRANITE TOMBS OF THE  
METROPOLIS, SLIVERS OF LIGHT  
DISSOLVE THE SHRINKING GREY  
THAT ONCE WAS NIGHT. THE  
CITY IS WAKING UP.



BRRR... GUESS THAT'LL TEACH  
HARRIED HARRY NOT TO PICK UP  
**DANGERS!** YOU NEVER CAN  
TELL WHEN A KNELL WILL BE FLAG-  
GIN' **YOUR** WAGON... ESPECIALLY IF  
YOU HOP ON FOR THIS NEXT TRIP  
QUIP COMING UP! TOXIC BUDDY?

T  
H  
E



E  
N  
D

SHARPEN UP YOUR SORCERY SWORDS... FRIGHT KNIGHTS  
AND TIGHTEN YOUR TERROR TUNICS WHILE I UNSHEATH A STARTLING  
SONNET OF A WILY WIZARD WHO TRADES IN HIS BAG OF  
TRICKS FOR...

# A CLOAK OF DARKNESS



SWIRLING VAPORS CREPT ALONG THE CRUSTED  
WALLS OF XANTHUS'S DUNGEON SANCTUARY...  
IGNITING THE SPUTTERING CANDLE WICKS INTO  
DANCING FLICKERS. THE WIZARD LAUGHED, RE-  
MEMBERING EARLIER... THE AWE HIS MAGIC  
HAD IMPOSED UPON THE KING'S COURT. BUT  
NOW IN THE STAGNANT UNDERGROUND OF  
HIS CONCLAVE... ONLY THE STRANGLING SQUEAK-  
ING OF A FAMISHED RAT PROCLAIMED HIM.

WITH THE STENCH OF DEATH EMPTYING INTO  
THE DARKNESS AROUND HIM... SUDDENLY FROM  
THE WHISPS OF ACRID SULPHUR, A HIDEOUS  
FORM DISSOLVED INTO SHAPE! A MESSENGER  
FROM **HADES!** CALLED UP TO SERVE XANTHUS  
ONCE MORE IN HIS QUEST FOR POWER...

XANTHUS HAD KEPT THE SECRETS OF HIS SORCERY  
WELL HIDDEN...LOCKED BEHIND THE MASSIVE PORTALS  
OF HIS CATACOMBED REFUGE...

NOW DEMON SERVANT...  
ANSWER MY CALL!

YOU SUMMON ME  
AGAIN MORTAL! I HAVE  
DONE YOUR BIDDING TIME  
ENOUGH TO KNOW THE  
REASON!



HAVE YOU NOT REAPED  
THE BOUNTY OF EACH DE-  
SPAIRING DEED I INVOKE?  
YOU HAVE BEEN WELL  
PAID FOR YOUR SERVICES.

I'LL NOT ARGUE THAT,  
INFIDEL...YOU HAVE  
PROVED YOURSELF  
MASTER OF ALL  
SORCERERS...  
**BUT ONE!**

WHAT RIDDLE IS THIS  
FIEND OF HADES...WHO  
IS GREATER THAN I?



**HAHAHAM**...MORTAL...  
SURELY YOU KNOW THERE  
IS BUT **ONE** LORD OF  
NECROMANCY...

**SATAN!** BEGONE  
FOUL SPIRIT...ENOUGH  
OF YOUR PRATTLE. I DID  
NOT ASK TO BE MOCKED



RETURN TO YOUR  
KINGDOM...AND LEAVE  
ME ALONE IN MINE!

YOU WOULD CURSE THE  
SERVANT WHO BRINGS YOU  
THE SECRET OF SATAN...  
AND TOSS AWAY YOUR  
CHANCE TO RIVAL **LUCIFER**  
**HIMSELF!**



NOT EVEN **YOU** CAN  
MANAGE THAT TRICK  
MERCENARY!

NO ONE WHO SERVES SATAN  
IN HADES CAN ACT AGAINST  
HIM...HE HAS SEEN TO IT.  
BUT **YOU** COULD WIZARD...  
IF YOU HAD THE **CLOAK!**





SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME MAGICIAN...  
LUCIFER HAS PREDICTED ALL THINGS EVIL...  
HIS CLOAK OF DARKNESS HAS GIVEN HIM  
THE FORTUNES OF MAN'S SINS. WITH THIS  
CLOAK, HE POSSESSES ETERNAL EXISTENCE...



...AS YOU WOULD LIKE THE CLOAK  
WERE YOURS! THINK OF IT WIZARD...  
ALL THE WORLD YOUR DOMAIN...  
FOR A PROMISE!



THIS PROMISE...OF WHAT  
MIGHT IT BE? CERTAINLY  
NOT MY SOUL, THAT IS  
LONG YOURS.

ONLY THAT ONCE  
YOU ARE RULER OF  
YOUR KINGDOM, I WILL  
BE RULER OF MINE...  
IN HELL!



IF THAT IS YOUR  
PRICE...I ACCEPT, SMALL  
REWARD FOR SUCH PAY-  
MENT...LEAD ME TO  
THIS CLOAK!

TOUCH MY FORM AND  
PREPARE YOURSELF MORTAL  
WE GO TO... **HADES !!!**



AHEAD IS THE THRONE ROOM OF  
SATAN, I CAN TAKE YOU NO FURTHER.  
YOU WILL FIND HIS CLOAK...IN THERE!

WAIT...YOU MUST  
NOT ABANDON  
ME!!!



FEAR NOT WIZARD! YOUR  
SORCERY WILL PROTECT YOU.  
BE SWIFT LEST SATAN  
DISCOVER YOU!





MIGHTY SORCERER...  
REMEMBER IT WAS I  
WHO HELPED YOU TO  
GET THE CLOAK. OUR  
BARGAIN THEN.



IF THIS INFERNO IS  
THE REWARD YOU SEEK...  
YOU SHALL HAVE IT! BUT  
**NOT AS A KING!**

THERE CAN BE NO KING  
IN HADES WORLD WHILE  
I HAVE THE CLOAK.. DEMON!



AND I CHOOSE TO BE  
KING IN MY WORLD...  
**NOT YOURS!**



AND WHEN XANTHUS HAD RETURNED  
TO HIS WORLD... TRIUMPHANT, NO ONE  
COULD THREATEN THE IMMORTAL  
SUPREMACY OF HIS MAGIC...



...NOR CHALLENGE HIS  
PROCLAMATION THAT HE  
BE HAILED AS EMPEROR  
OF ALL SORCERERS!  
NO ONE



...BUT SATAN HIMSELF !!!



I HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH MORTAL...DO NOT TEST ME FURTHER! YOU WILL RETURN THE CLOAK.

YOUR WORDS DO NOT FLATTER ME...HADE'S EMPEROR...RETURN WHILE YOU MAY TO YOUR FIERY HAVEN!



YOU CANNOT IMPOSE YOUR WILL HERE, SATAN. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GO WITH YOU.

YOU BRING YOUR OWN DOOM UPON US. FOOL! I AM NOT SO EASILY CONQUERED!



MY FINAL CONQUEST! I HAVE DEFEATED YOU. EVIL MONARCH SATAN HAS FALLEN!!!

YOU...GASP...HAVE CHOSEN THE...WORLD... YOU REALLY SEEK...MAGICIAN

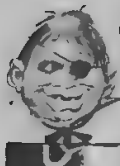


...THE CLOAK...IT GAVE YOU THE POWER TO TAKE MY PLACE IN THIS WORLD XANTHUS! NOW THAT I'M DEFEATED

...YOU WON'T MIND RULING MY WORLD... AND TAKING MY PLACE IN HADES...FOREVER!!!

UNHOLY SMOKES! SEEMS OUR STEAWING SORCERER CERTAINLY GOT HIMSELF IN-TO A SIZZLING SITUATION THIS TIME! YOU BORROW A GUY'S CAPE AND THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW... YOU'RE 'FILLING HIS SHOES...OUCH!





READY TO GO ROMAN IN THE GLOAMING WITH ONE OF CAESAR'S SOLDIERS FANGED FRIENDS? THEN LEAP BACK WITH ME THROUGH MYSTERICAL HISTORY TO 41 A.D. WHEN ROME'S LEGIONS HAVE EXTENDED THE EMPIRE TO THE BRITISH ISLES, BRINGING CIVILIZATION TO A DARK AND SUPERSTITIOUS LAND. BUT WATCH NOW AND SEE IF EVEN ROMAN MIGHT CAN PENETRATE THE LURKING HORRORS OF THE


# Cave of the Druids!

HIS STRONG RIGHT HAND CLENCHING AND UNCLENCHING ON THE HILT OF HIS FLAT SWORD, MARCUS SEVERUS STARED IMPATIENTLY INTO THE LEATHERY FACE OF THE ANCIENT. LEFT HIS REPUTATION IN THE LEGION HAD BEEN MADE BY ACTION. THE OLD MAN'S RAMBLINGS AND WARNINGS DID NOT SIT WELL.

GO NO FURTHER, LEGIONNAIRE! THE COMRADES YOU SEEK PLUNGED UNHEEDING INTO THE BLACK WOOD BE NOT AS FOOLISH AS THEY!


MY ORDERS ARE TO CONTACT THAT PATROL WHEREVER THEY MAY BE. IF THIS IS THEIR PATH SO BE IT!






EVIL HAUNTS THIS SHADOWED PLACE! THOSE WHO ENTER SELDOM LEAVE!

I WON MY FREEDOM  
IN THE SANDS OF THE  
COLISEUM, GRANDFATHER!  
IF I ESCAPED A GLADIATOR'S  
DEATH, SURELY I CAN FIND  
MY WAY OUT OF YOUR  
FOREST!



THE TRAIL TWISTED AND TURNED AMONG  
THE GNARLED SPREADING OAKS WHOSE  
INTERTWINING OVERHEAD BRANCHES ALL  
BUT SHUT OUT THE LATE AFTERNOON SUN...

A SOUND DRIFTED THROUGH THE SILENT  
TREES, TINKLING AND HOLLOW, LIKE THE  
LAUGHTER OF A WOMAN FAR AWAY...



BLAST THE THICK-HEADED  
CENTURION WHO'D LEAD  
A PATROL INTO *THIS*! WHAT  
WAS HE THINKING OF?  
WHAT LED HIM TO IT?

DID ANY BIRD EVER MAKE  
SUCH A MOCKING SOUND?  
YET WHAT ELSE  
COULD IT BE?

CLEARING AHEAD,  
BUT THAT SMELL  
COMING FROM IT...  
THERE'S BUT ONE  
SUCH STENCH.



...THE STENCH OF DEATH!!

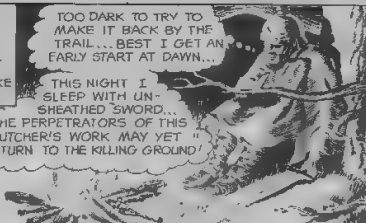
THE PATROL! EVERY  
MAN WITH HIS HEART  
RIPPED OUT!

NIGHT HAD DESCENDED ON THE GLOOMY WOOD BY THE TIME MARCUS HAD PUT THE LAST LEGIONNAIRE IN A SHALLOW GRAVE, LEAVING THE MUTILATED BODIES SOME SMALL PROTECTION AGAINST THE SCAVENGERS OF THE FOREST UNTIL THE GARRISON COULD TAKE PROPER ACTION.

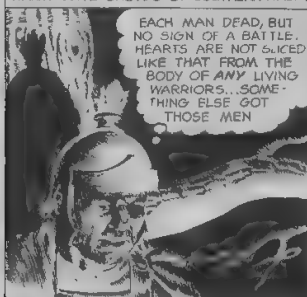


TOO DARK TO TRY TO MAKE IT BACK BY THE TRAIL... BEST I GET AN EARLY START AT DAWN...

THIS NIGHT I SLEEP WITH UNSHEATHED SWORD... THE PERPETRATORS OF THIS BUTCHER'S WORK MAY YET RETURN TO THE KILLING GROUND!



LONG HOURS CREEPT BY, NIGHT BREEZES BLEW CHILL AND THE FOREST DAMP SET IN, MAKING MARCUS LONG FOR THE WARM OLIVE GROVES OF SOUTHERN ITALY.



EACH MAN DEAD, BUT NO SIGN OF A BATTLE. HEARTS ARE NOT SLICED LIKE THAT FROM THE BODY OF ANY LIVING WARRIORS... SOMETHING ELSE GOT THOSE MEN

THERE WAS THE SOUND OF MOVEMENT IN THE TREES WITH A CRY, MARCUS LEAPED UP ONLY TO BE CAUGHT IN THE VICE-GRIP OF SLITHERING SNAKES OF GNARLED OAK...



THE TREES! THEY'RE ALIVE!

THE CONSTRICTING BANDS DREW TIGHT FORCING THE LIFE BREATH OUT OF THE LEGIONNAIRE WHOSE BLADE FLASHED AND HACKED AT THE UNNATURAL MENACE...



SWORD'S NO GOOD! LIKE STRIKING IRON...

THIS IS HOW THE PATROL DIED... CRUSHED BY THESE DEMON TREES!

ONE LAST CHANCE... GOING TO DIE... F I MISS...



MARCUS FLICKED WITH HIS SWORD, SENDING A BLAZING FIREBRAND ARCHING INTO THE AIR.



IGNORING THE PAIN OF GRIPPING THE SMOULDERING BRANCH, THE ROMAN THRUST AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH HIS FERY WEAPON AGAINST THE DEATH CLUTCH OF THE OAKS...



WEAKENED BY THE ORDEAL, MARCUS COLLAPSED WITHIN THE SAFETY OF THE FIRE'S GLOW, NOT MOVING FOR LONG MOMENTS, THEN FREEZING STILL AS FROM THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS SOMETHING STIRRED.



HE FOUGHT FOR NOTHING... THE TREES HAVE DONE THEIR WORK!

THIS NIGHT WE'LL FACE THE ALTAR WITH ANOTHER ROMAN HEART FOR GREAT D SPATER!

EVERY MUSCLE IN HIS STEEL FRAMED BODY TENSED AS MARCUS HEARD THE STEALTHY FOOTFALLS ON THE FOREST FLOOR... A SHADOWY FIGURE BENT NEAR...



THE HORNED HELMETS! THEY'RE DRUIDS... DEMON WORSHIPPERS ALL!





ABOVE HIM, THE TREE LEAVES WERE RAT-  
TLED BY A FAINT WIND WHICH ALSO CAR-  
RIED WITH IT THE SAME DISTANT LAUGHTER  
MARCUS HAD HEARD EARLIER...



BY MY ONE GOOD EYE,  
IT *IS* A WOMAN'S LAUGH!  
FROM THE SAME DIREC-  
TION AS CAME THESE  
BARBAROUS ASSASSINS!

CAUTIOUSLY, THE ROMAN SLID THROUGH THE DARK-  
NESS AND INTO ANOTHER, SMALLER CLEARING  
MARKED BY A HUGE BOULDER BEARING STRANGE  
SYMBOLS...



A DRUIDSTONE... AND  
VOICES FROM BENEATH  
IT. NO NEED TO READ  
THE MARKINGS TO  
KNOW THIS IS THE  
VIPER'S LAIR!



CHANTING... LED BY  
A WOMAN'S VOICE...  
THESE STEPS PLUNGE  
SO FAR... PERHAPS TO  
THE UNDERWORLD  
ITSELF!

GREAT DISASTER,  
YOU WHO HAVE  
MADE THE TREES  
MOVE AT OUR COM-  
MAND, YOU WHO  
HAVE GIVEN VAST  
POWERS TO MY  
WAND OF YEWE, YOU  
WHO FEAST ON THE  
HEARTS OF ROMAN  
DEAD... HEAR YOUR  
PRIESTESS!

THE GODS TAKE ME!  
THE DRUIDS TRY TO  
RIVAL PLUTO HIMSELF!

MARCUS CROUCHED LOW IN SILENT FURY AS THE BARBAROUS RITES WERE PLAYED OUT...

BREATHE LIFE INTO OUR SLAIN KING... THE LIFE FROM THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO KILLED HIM...

'TIS AS I FEARED! THE HEARTS WERE NOT WORTHY TO MOVE SO NOBLE A BODY! EVEN PASSES OF THE MIGHTY WAND HAVE NO AVAIL



EVEN AS YOU SEE ME AND MY WAND AS PROOF OF DIS-PATER'S MAGIC... EVEN AS I DREW THE OTHER ROMANS TO US... EVEN SO DOES MY SORCERY CALL YET ANOTHER ANOTHER OF WARRIOR'S HEART...



... HE WHO LURKS BEHIND YOU! SEIZE HIM! HIS HEART WILL BRING LIFE TO YOUR KING!

IT WAS HER LAUGHTER I HEARD! TAUNTING ME ON, DRAWING ME HERE...



DRUIDESS WITCH! LEARN HOW DEARLY MARCUS SEVERUS SELLS HIS HEART

OUR NUMBERS ARE NOT THE MATCH FOR HIS SKILL!

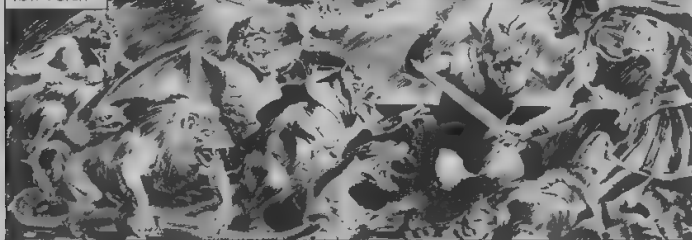
THEN LET HIM FACE THE POWERS OF MY WAND!



ABOVE THE RING OF HIS OWN SLASHING SWORD, MARCUS HEARD THE SOUND OF THE DRUIDESS' MOCKING LAUGHTER AS HER WAND DANCED THROUGH THE AIR... THE ATTACKERS MELTED INTO A HIDEOUS NEW FORM!

FIGHT ON! FIGHT ON ONLY AS THE SPAWN OF GREAT DISPATER CAN!

JUPITER'S BLOOD! SHE PITS ME WITH GLADIATORS OF THE DAMNED!



MY STRUGGLE IS DOOMED! THE KILLING STROKES LEFT IN MY ARM ARE NUMBERED... EACH THRUST BRINGS ME ANOTHER STEP CLOSER TO DEATH AT THESE UNNATURAL HANDS!



YET ALL THIS EVIL... ALL HER POWER... LIES IN THE WAND!



ACHING LIMBS AND MUSCLES, PUSHED TO THE LIMITS OF MORTAL ENDURANCE, WENT TAUT WITH ONE LAST EFFORT, AND OUT OF THE SWIRLING RIPTIDE OF COMBAT... MARCUS LEAPED!

MY WAND! STOP HIM, STOP HIM!



BASE IDOL! CONSUME THE FRUIT OF YOUR OWN EVIL!



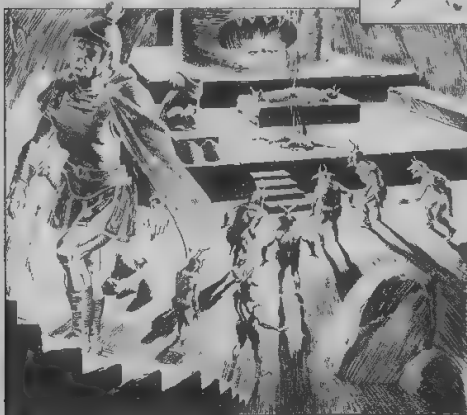
A GREAT QUIET ENVELOPED THE HUGE CAVERN AS THE WAND OF YEW TURNED TO A BLACKENED CRISP WITHIN THE RAGING INFERNO OF THE IDOL'S MOUTH...

IT WORKED! BUT...  
BUT WHY ARE  
THEY STARING?!

NO! OH  
N NOOOO!



PITY AND REVULSION ARE NOT STOCK IN TRADE OF A WARRIOR AND SOLDIER, YET MARCUS COULD FEEL BOTH AS HE WEARILY PUSHED THROUGH THE STUNNED DRUIDS TO THE STEPS LEADING TO THE OUTER WORLD OF SANITY AND LIGHT... LEAVING THE CHARRED SCENT OF BURNT ASHES TO FOREVER HAUNT THE CAVE OF THE DRUIDS!



THE WAND! IT  
WAS MY LIFE...  
MY POWER!  
ITS FATE WAS  
MY OWN!  
EEEEEEEEEE!



AND AS GOOD OL'  
MARCUS WANDERS OUT  
OF THE CAVE, THERE'S  
NO SENSE IN YOUR  
HANGING AROUND  
WANDERING WHAT MY  
NEXT WEIRD WORK'S  
LIKE... TURN TO IT.  
IT'S WANDERFUL!





# The Fall of The F

**D**URING THE WHOLE OF A DULL, DARK, AND SOUNDLESS DAY IN THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR, WHEN THE CLOUDS HUNG OPPRESSIVELY LOW IN THE HEAVENS I HAD BEEN PASSING ALONE, ON HORSEBACK, THROUGH A SINGULARLY DREARY TRACT OF COUNTRY, AND AT LENGTH FOUND MYSELF, AS THE SHADES OF THE EVENING DREW ON, WITHIN VIEW OF THE MELANCHOLY HOUSE OF USHER.

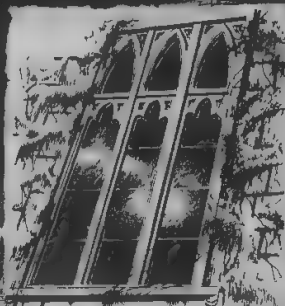
I KNOW NOT HOW IT WAS, BUT WITH THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE BUILDING, A SENSE OF INSUFFERABLE GLOOM PERVADE MY SPIRIT.



# House of Usher

FROM THE CLASSIC  
BY EDGAR ALLEN POE  
ADAPTED  
AND DRAWN  
BY TONY SUTTON

THE  
HIGH  
HE



I LOOKED UPON THE SLENE BEFORE ME, UPON THE  
MERE HOUSE, AND THE SIMPLE LANDSCAPE  
FEATURES OF THE DOMAIN - UPON THE BLEAK  
WALLS - UPON THE VACANT EYE LIKE WINDOWS  
UPON A FEW WHITE TRUNKS OF DECAYED  
TREES - WITH AN UTER DEPRESSION OF SOUL.

WHAT WAS IT - I DARED TO THINK - WHAT WAS  
IT THAT SO UNNERVED ME IN THE CONTEM-  
PLATION OF THE HOUSE OF USHER?



HERE WAS AN ICINESS, A SINKING, A SICKENING  
OF THE HEART - AN UNREDEEMED DREARI-  
NESS OF THOUGHT...

NEVERTHELESS, IN THIS MANSION OF GLOOM I  
NOW PROPOSED TO MYSELF A SOJOURN OF  
SOME WEEKS.

I REINED MY HORSE TO THE PRECIPITOUS BRINK OF A BLACK AND LUNAR TARN THAT LAY IN UNRUFFLED LUSTRE BY THE DWELLING, AND GAZED DOWN - BUT WITH A SHUDDER EVEN MORE THRILLING THAN BEFORE - UPON THE REMODELED AND INVERTED IMAGES OF THE GREY SEDGE, AND THE GHASTLY TREE STEMS, AND THE EMPTY STARING WINDOWS.

ABOUT THE WHOLE MANSION THERE HUNG AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAD NO AFFINITY WITH THE AIR OF HEAVEN, BUT WHICH HAD REEKED UP FROM THE DECAYED TREES, AND THE GREY WALL, AND THE SILENT TARN - A PESTILENT AND MYSTIC VAPOR, DULL, SLUGGISH, AND FAINTLY DISCERNIBLE, AND LEADEN HUED.

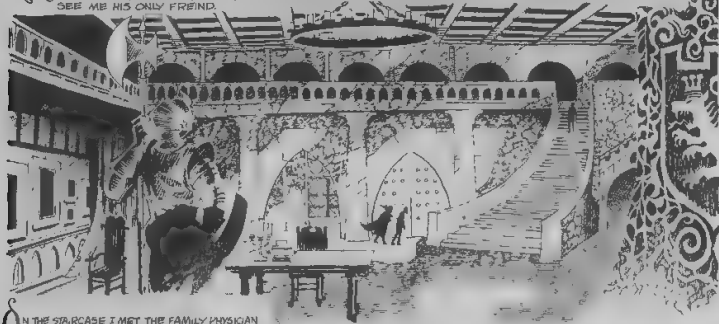
NOTICING THESE THINGS I ROODE OVER A SHORT CAUSEWAY TO THE HOUSE, A SERVANT IN WAITING TOOK MY HORSE AND I ENTERED THE GOTHIC ARCHWAY OF THE HALL.



A VALET, OF STEALTHY STEP, THENCE CONDUCTED ME IN SILENCE, THRU MANY DARK AND INTRICATE PASSAGES IN MY PROGRESS TO THE STUDIO OF HIS MASTER, MUCH THAT I ENCOUNTERED ON THE WAY CONTRIBUTED, I KNOW NOT HOW, TO HEIGHTEN THE VAGUE SENTIMENTS OF WHICH I HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN.

WHILE THE OBJECTS AROUND ME - WHILE THE CARVINGS OF THE CEILINGS, THE SOMBRE TAPESTRIES OF THE WALLS, THE EBON BLACKNESS OF THE FLOORS, AND THE PHANTASMAGORIC ANIMORPHIC TROCKIES - WHICH RATTLED AS I STRODE WERE FAMILIAR TO ME - UNFAMILIAR WERE THE FANCIES WHICH ORDINARY IMAGES STIRRED UP.

RODERICK Usher had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country, a letter that admitted of no other than a personal reply. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental disorder which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me his only friend.

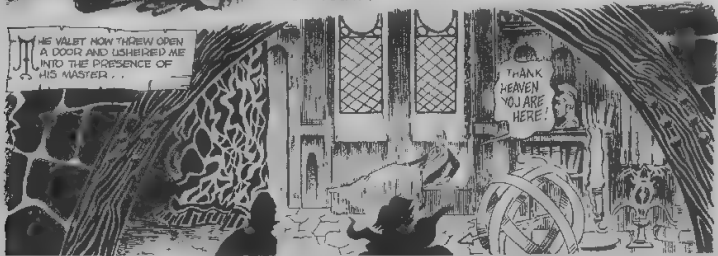


IN THE STAIRCASE I MET THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN. HIS COUNTENANCE WORE A MINGLED EXPRESSION OF LOW UNNINGS AND PERPLEXITY. HE ACCOSTED ME WITH TREPIDATION AND PASSED ON.



I REALLY KNEW LITTLE OF MY FRIEND. HIS RESERVE HAD BEEN ALWAYS EXCESSIVE AND HABITUAL. HIS VERY ANCIENT FAMILY HAD BEEN NOTED FOR A PECULIAR SENSIBILITY OF TEMPERMENT, DISPLAYING ITSELF THROUGH LONG AGES IN MANY WORKS OF EXALTED ART AND MUSIC. I HAD LEARNED TOO THAT THE STEM OF THE USHER RACE ALL TIME HONORED AS IT WAS HAD PUT FORTH AT NO PERIOD NO ENDURING BRANCH. THE ENTIRE FAMILY LAY IN THE DIRECT LINE OF DESCENT.

HIS VALET NOW THREW OPEN A DOOR AND USHERED ME INTO THE PRESENCE OF HIS MASTER.

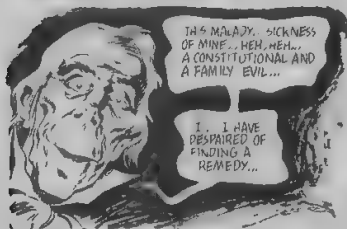


THANK  
HEAVEN  
YOU ARE  
HERE!





... AND FOR SOME MOMENTS, WHILE HE SPOKE NOT I GAZED ON HIM WITH A FEELING HALF OF DITY, HALF OF AWE, SURELY MAN HAD NEVER BEFORE SO TERRIBLY ALTERED IN SO BRIEF A PERIOD, AS HAD RODERICK USHER!



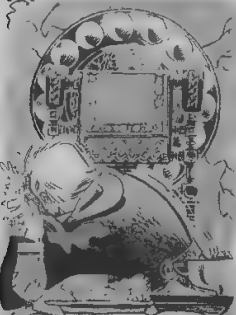
TH'S MALADY.. SICKNESS OF MINE... HEH, HEH... A CONSTITUTIONAL AND A FAMILY EVIL...

I... I HAVE DESPAIRED OF FINDING A REMEDY...



A MERE NERVOUS AFFECTION WHICH WILL SURELY PASS NOW THAT YOU, MY LOYAL FRIEND, ARE HERE,

HE NATURE OF HIS MALADY DISPLAYED ITSELF IN A HOST OF UNNATURAL SENSATIONS...



IT IS A MORBID ACUTENESS OF THE SENSES YES, THAT MOST OF ALL / THE MOST INSIPID FOOD ALONE IS ENDURABLE TO ME...



... ONLY GARMETS OF A CERTAIN TEXTURE...



... MY EYES ARE TORTURED BY THE FAINTEST LIGHT...

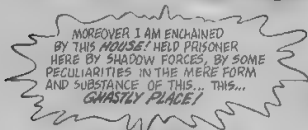


I SHALL PERISH  
I MUST PERISH IN  
THIS DEPLORABLE  
FOLLY!

I SHUDDER AT THE  
THOUGHT OF ANY, EVEN  
THE MOST TRIVIAL INCIDENT  
WHICH MAY OPERATE ON  
THIS INTOLERABLE AGGITATION  
OF SOUL.



I FEEL THAT THE  
PERIOD WILL SOON ARRIVE  
WHEN I MUST ABANDON LIFE AND  
REASON TOGETHER IN SOME STRUGGLE  
WITH THE GRIM PHANTASM... FEAR!



MOREOVER I AM ENCHAINED  
BY THIS HOUSE! HELD PRISONER  
HERE BY SHADOW FORCES, BY SOME  
PECULIARITIES IN THE MERE FORM  
AND SUBSTANCE OF THIS... THIS...  
GHOSTLY PLACE!



INDEED THE GREY WALLS, THE TURRETS AND THE  
DIM TARN INTO WHICH THEY ALL LOOKED DOWN,  
HAD OVER THE MANY YEARS HE HAD NEVER  
VENTURED FORTH ENRIMBED ROVERICK USHER!



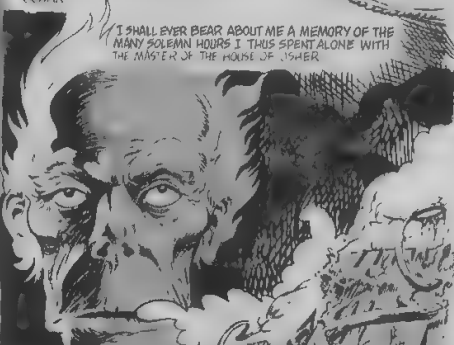
WHILE HE SPOKE, THE LADY MADELINE, HIS SISTER, SOLE  
COMPANION AND LAST AND ONLY RELATIVE ON  
EARTH PASSED THROUGH A REMOTE PORTION  
OF THE APARTMENT...

HE ADMITTED THAT MUCH OF THE PELLACID GLOOM WHICH THIS AFFLICTED MAN COULD BE TRACED TO THE SEVERE AND LONG CONTINUED ILLNESS OF HIS SISTER. THE DISEASE OF THE LADY MADEIRA HAD LONG BAFLED THE SKILL OF HER PHYSICIANS.



FOR SEVERAL DAYS ENSUING HER NAME WAS UNMENTIONED, AND DURING THIS PERIOD I ATTEMPTED TO ALLEVIATE THE MELANCHOLY OF MY FRIEND, WE PAINTED AND READ TOGETHER, OR I LISTENED, AS IF IN A DREAM, TO THE WILD IMPROVISATIONS OF HIS SPEAKING GUITAR.

I SHALL EVER BEAR ABOUT ME A MEMORY OF THE MANY SOLEMN HOURS I THUS SPENT ALONE WITH THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE OF USHER.



ON THE CLOSING IN OF THE EVENING OF HER ARRIVAL AT THE HOUSE SHE SUCCUMBED, AND I KNEW THAT THE LADY, AT LEAST WHILE *LIVING*, WOULD BE SEEN BY ME NO MORE.



I SHUDDERED KNOWING NOT WHY FROM THE LONG IMPROVISED DIRGES FROM THE PAINTINGS OVER WHICH HIS ELABORATE FANCY BROODED, AND I CAME TO PERCEIVE A FULL CONSCIOUSNESS ON THE PART OF USHER TO THE TOTTERING OF HIS LOFTY REASON UPON HER THRONE.



A FAVORITE BALLAD OF HIS OWN INVENTION REVEALED A BELIEF IN THE SENTENCE OF ALL VEGETABLE THINGS. THIS BELIEF WAS CONNECTED WITH THE GREY WALLS OF THE HOUSE, THE VERY ARRANGEMENT OF THE STONES AND ESPECIALLY THE LIVING FUNGI THAT OVERSPREAD THEM.



HIS CREEPING VEGETATION, THE DECAYED TREES THAT STOOD AROUND ABOVE ALL THE LONG UNDISTURBED ENDURANCE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT AND ITS REDUPLICATION IN THE STILL WATERS OF THE TARN, CAUSED AN ATMOSPHERE A CERTAIN CONDENSATION OF EVIL ABOUT THE WATERS AND THE WALLS, AN ATMOSPHERE OF EVIL THAT MOLDED THE DESTINIES OF THE USHERS AND WHICH MADE MY FRIEND WHAT I NOW SAW.

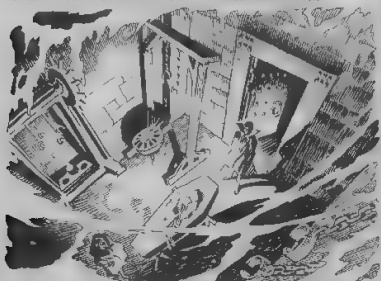
ONE EVEN HAD HAVING INFORMED ME ABRUPTLY THAT THE LADY MADE, HE WAS NO MORE, HE STATED HIS INTENTION OF PRESERVING HER CORPSE FOR A FORTNIGHT IN ONE OF THE VAULTS WITHIN THE MAIN WALLS OF THE BUILDING THE BROTHER HAD BEEN LED TO HIS RESOLUTION BY CON-

SIDERATION OF THE UNUSUAL CHARACTER OF THE MALADY OF THE DECEASED, OF CERTAIN OBTRUSIVE AND EAGER INQUIRIES ON THE PART OF HER MEDICAL MEN, AND OF THE REMOTE AND EXPOSED SITUATION OF THE BURIAL GROUND OF THE FAMILY.



AT THE REQUEST OF USHER, I PERSONALLY AIDED HIM IN THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TEMPORARY ENTOMBMENT

THE BODY, HAVING BEEN ENCOFFINED, WE TWO ALONE BORE IT TO ITS REST IN THE VAULT. THIS DARK DARK CHAMBER, LONG UNOPENED, LAY AT GREAT DEPTH BENEATH MY OWN SLEEPING APARTMENT.



THE VAULT HAD BEEN USED, APPARENTLY, IN REMOTE FEUDAL TIMES, FOR THE WORST PURPOSES OF A DUNGEON-KEEP AND IN LATER DAYS AS A POWDER ROOM. AS A PORTION OF FLOOR AND THE ARCHWAY WERE SHEATHED WITH COPPER, THE DOOR OF MASSIVE IRON HAD BEEN, ALSO, SIMILARLY PROTECTED. ITS IMMENSE WEIGHT CAUSED AN UNUSUALLY SHARP GRATING SOUND, AS IT MOVED ON ITS HINGES.



HAVING DEPOSITED OUR MOURNFUL BURDEN UPON TRESSELS WITHIN THIS REGION OF HORROR, WE TURNED ASIDE THE LID OF THE COFFIN...WE COULD NOT REGARD HER UNAWED. SHE WORE A SUSPICIOUSLY LINGERING SMILE WHICH IS SO TERRIBLE IN DEATH.

AS THE TEMPEST RAGED  
OUTSIDE MY WINDOW  
THERE CAME A SUDDEN  
RAP UPON THE DOOR,

YOU HAVE NOT  
**SEEN** IT?  
. BUT STAY  
YOU SHALL

OF THE HUGE MASSES OF AGITATED VAPOR WERE GLOWING  
IN THE UNNATURAL LIGHT OF A FAINTLY LUMINOUS GASEOUS  
EXHAUST IN WHICH ENVELOPED THE MAN ON

YOU MUST NOT - YOU SHALL NOT  
BEHOLD THIS! IT'S MERELY AN  
ELECTRICAL PHENOMENA... LET US  
CLOSE THE CASEMENT... HERE, I'LL  
READ AND YOU WILL LISTEN... SO WE  
WILL PASS AWAY THIS TERRIBLE  
NIGHT TOGETHER.

USHER HEARKENED TO THE WORDS I  
READ FROM THE ANTIQUE VOLUME  
WITH A WILD OVERSTRAINED AIR OF  
VACUITY.

"AND ETHEL RED CRACKED AND  
RIPPED AND TORE ALL ASUNDER  
THE PLANKS OF THE DOOR.  
THE NOISE OF THE DRY AND HOLLOW  
SOUNDING WOOD RESOUNDED  
THROUGHOUT THE FOREST."

"AND ETHELRED UPLIFTED HIS MACE  
AND STRUCK UPON THE HEAD THE  
DRAGON WHO FELL WITH A SHRIEK  
SO HORRID AND HARSH THE LIKE  
WAS NEVER HEARD BEFORE."

AAAAAAYING!!

**KKKRASH KKKKRR CREAK!**

I STARTED AND PAUSED. I THOUGHT I  
HEARD THE VERY ECHO OF THE SOUND  
THE 'OK DESCRIBED'

HERE AGAIN; RAISED ABRUPTLY NO DOUBT NOW!  
I DID ACTUALLY HEAR A HARSH SCREAMING  
OR SOME PROTRACTED GRATING SOUND!

...AND NOW THE CHAMPION APPROACHED TO WHERE THE GREAT ENCHANTED BRASS SHIELD HUNG UPON THE WALL; WHICH IN SOOTH TARRIED NOT FOR HIS FUL COMING BUT FEL DOWN AT HIS FEET UPON THE FLOOR WITH A GREAT AND TERROBLE RINGING SOUND

CRASH BRAANNING!!

NO SOONER HAD THESE SYLLABLES PASSED MY LIPS, THAN...

NOW HEAR IT? ... I HEAR AND HAVE HEARD IT... MANY HOURS, MANY DAYS HAVE I HEARD IT... YET I DARED NOT SPEAK! SAID I NOT THAT MY SENSES WERE ACUTE? I TELL YOU I HEARD HER FIRST FEET'S MOVEMENTS IN THE COFFIN...

THE REMAINS OF THE DEAD THE GATING OF THE IRON WINGS OF HER KIN AND HER STRUGGLES WITH THE COPPERED ARCHWAY OF THE VAULT. WILL SHE NOT BE HERE AND?

IS SHE NOT HURRYING TO UPRRAID ME FOR MY HASTE? HER FOOTSTEP ON THE STAIR... THE HEAVEY AND HORRIBLE BEATING OF HER HEART...

MADMAN!  
I TELL YOU  
THAT SHE  
NOW STANDS

WITHOUT  
THE DOOR!

FOR A MOMENT SHE REMAINED TREMBLING AND REELING TO AND FRO UPON THE THRESHOLD - THEN WITH A LOW MOANING CRY, FELL HEAVILY INWARD UPON THE PERSON OF HER BROTHER AND IN HER FINAL DEATH AGONY BORE HIM TO THE FLOOR A CORPSE, AND A VICTIM TO THE TERRORS HE HAD ANTICIPATED

FROM THAT CHAMBER AND FROM THAT MANSION I FLED AGHAST THE STORM WAS STILL ABROAD IN ALL ITS WRATH AS I FOUND MYSELF CROSSING THE OLD CAUSEWAY. SUDDENLY THERE SHOT ALONG THE PATH A WILD LIGHT AND I TURNED TO SEE WHENCE A GLEAM SO UNUSUAL COULD HAVE ISSUED; FOR THE VAST HOUSE AND ITS SHADOWS WERE ALONE BEHIND ME, THE RADIANCE WAS THAT OF THE FULL SETTING, AND BLOOD RED MOON, WHICH NOW SHONE VIVIDLY THROUGH THAT ONCE BARELY DISCERNABLE FISSURE, OF WHICH I HAVE BEFORE SPOKEN AS EXTENDING FROM THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING, IN A ZIG ZAG LINE TO THE BASE.

WHILE I GAZED THIS FISSURE RAPIDLY WIDENED—THERE CAME A FIERCE BREATH OF THE WORLD WIND. THE ENTIRE ORB OF THE SATELLITE BURST AT ONCE UPON MY SIGHT—MY BRAIN REELED AS I SAW THE ONCE MIGHTY WALLS RUSHING ASUNDER...

HERE WAS A LONG TUMULTUOUS SHOUTING SOUND LIKE THE VOICE OF A THOUSAND WATERS—AND THE DEEP AND DANK TARN AT MY FEET CLOSED SULENLY AND SILENTLY OVER THE FRAGMENTS OF ...  
*THE HOUSE OF USHER.*

THE END



IT'S WERD WESTERN TIME IN THE *EERIE* CORRAL, FEAR FOLLOWERS...  
TAKE A WRITHING RIDE WITH ME ALONG THE TERROR TRAIL WHICH  
WE'LL BE SHARING WITH THE...

# DARK RIDER!



DENVER! QUIT GAWKIN'! WE  
GOTTA MAKE IT THROUGH THE  
MOUNTAINS 'FORE THE SNOW  
GETS TOO HEAVY. YOU  
BEEN SKITTISH AS A COLT  
SINCE WE LEFT THE  
PROSPECTOR!

ALL DAY LONG I'VE  
HAD A FEELIN'...  
LIKE WE WAS BEIN'  
FOLLOWED

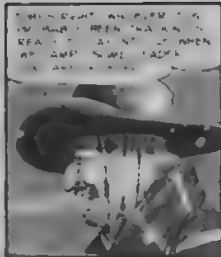
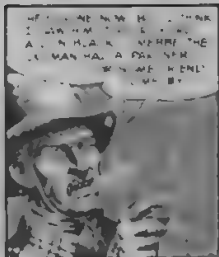
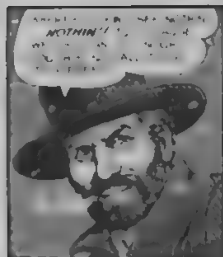
SEVERIN

THE DAY HAD BEEN  
BORN DARK AND  
BLEAK, A CONSTANT  
TWILIGHT... NOW  
THE MOUNTAIN WIND  
ROSE, WHISTLING  
AND BITING AT  
THE BACKS OF  
THE THREE HORSE-  
MEN CARRYING  
WITH IT THE FIRST  
FLAKES OF FALLING  
SNOW TO HAMPER  
AND OBSCURE  
VIS ON...

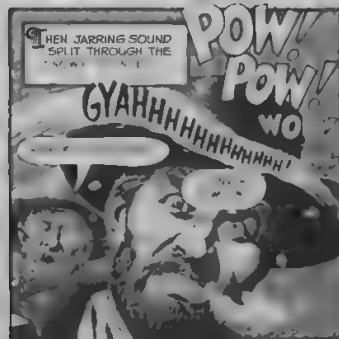
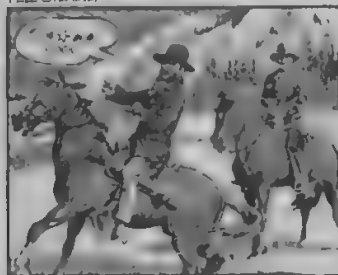


THERE! UP ON  
THE RIDGE...  
A RIDER!



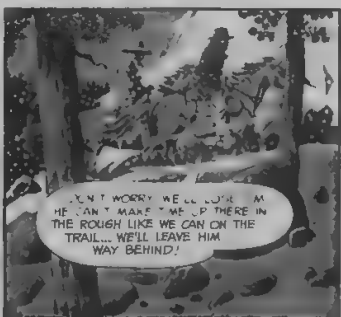


DICKARD'S WORDS WERE LOST ON THE WIND, LEAVING ONLY THE VAPOR OF HIS BREATH IN THE COLD AIR AS DENVER RODE OUT OF SIGHT. THE FALLING SNOWFLAKES GREW LARGER AND FELL STEADILY.



CAUTIOUSLY, THE TWO MEN URGED THEIR MOUNTS... THE SCREAM NOW ECHOING THROUGHOUT THE...



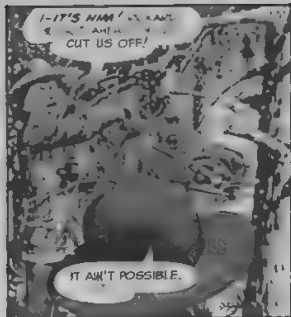


BOTH MEN PUSHED THEIR ANIMALS HARD OVER THE WINDING STEEP SLOPES OF THE NARROW MOUNTAIN TRAIL, UP AND DOWN THROUGH HIGH DANGEROUS STRETCHES AND LOW SHELTERED AREAS...



THIS'LL KEEP US OUTTA THE BLASTED SNOW FOR A WHILE, NOT DRIFTING NEARLY AS BAD IN HERE...

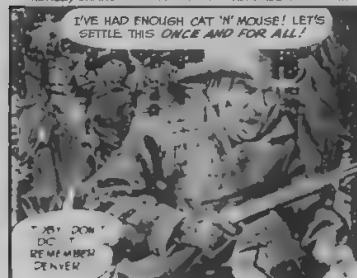
NEVER DID LIKE IT IN THIS HIGH TIMBER...SOMETHIN' SPOOKY 'BOUT THE WAY THE LIGHT FILTERS THROUGH THE TREES...



I-IT'S HIM! HE KNOWS WE'RE HERE!  
CUT US OFF!

IT AIN'T POSSIBLE.

WITH A CRY, TOBY SUDDENLY PUT THE SPURS TO HIS HORSE, CHARGING FORWARD AT BREAKNECK SPEED...



I'VE HAD ENOUGH CAT 'N' MOUSE! LET'S SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL!

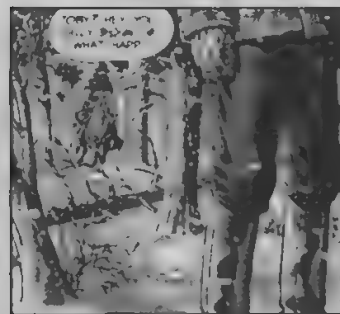
TOBY DON'T  
DO IT  
REMEMBER  
DENVER!

TOBY WAS OUT OF SIGHT BEFORE RICKARD COULD FINISH SHOUTING. IT WAS ALL HE COULD DO TO FOLLOW THE CRASHING SOUND OF TOBY'S HORSE AS IT RACED THROUGH THE TIMBER, UNTIL...



AAAAH-ARGHH

TOBY



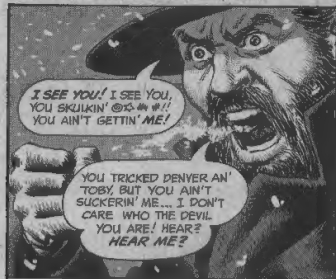
TOBY? HE'S NOT  
HOLDING BACK  
WHAT HAPPD?



LORD!

SHOULDN'T OF TRIED RUNNIN'  
THAT'S THE WAY TO GET  
CAUGHT HIM JUST R GHT...  
KNOCKED HIM OFF THE HORSE  
AN' BROKE HIS NECK LIKE  
A HANGMAN'S ROPE!

SOMEWHERE IN THE DISTANCE, RICKARD THOUGHT HE HEARD THE SNORT OF A HORSE, AND...

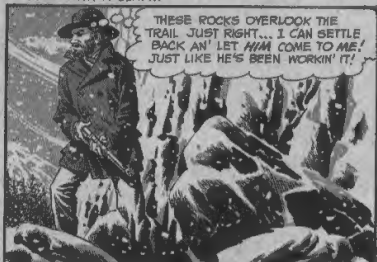


RICKARD PLUNGED OUT OF THE TIMBERLAND, BACK TO THE ICY DESOLATION OF THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL, DETERMINED TO LEAVE BEHIND THE PERSISTENT RIDER IN BLACK... ONLY TO BE TORTURED EACH STEP OF THE WAY BY THOUGHTS OF HIS DOGGED PURSUER...

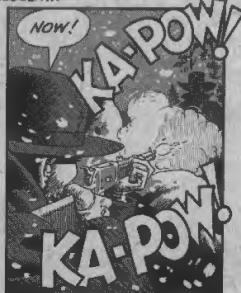
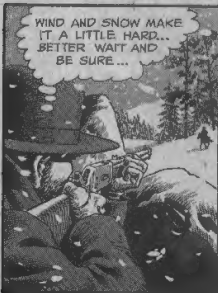


I'VE HAD A BELLYFUL OF THIS! HE GOT THE OTHERS SO WORKED UP THEY WENT AFTER HIM AND MADE STUPID MISTAKES ... MEBBE TWO CAN PLAY THAT GAME!

DISMOUNTING, RICKARD SENT HIS HORSE ON ALONG THE TRAIL WITH A SLAP...



FROM THE DISTANCE CAME THE SLOW ECHOING CLATTER OF A LONE HORSE'S HOOVES... WOOD AND METAL OF THE RIFLE WERE LIKE ICE, BUT RICKARD'S PALMS WERE MOIST WITH SWEAT... THE INSIDE OF HIS MOUTH WAS LIKE COTTON AS HE LINED UP THE TARGET COMING CLOSER AND CLOSER...



THE SOUND OF THE RIFLE FIRE REBOUNDED OFF THE SURROUNDING CLIFFS GROWING TO A ROAR OF CANNONS AND ANSWERED BY ANOTHER ROAR EVEN MORE TERRIBLE...

OH, NO... NO... GOD NO! THE NOISE FROM THE RIFLE... IT'S CAUSING A...A...

BRRRRR-  
TERRRRROOM!



...AVALANCHE  
-EEEEEEEEE!

IN TIME, THE SOUND FADED. RICKARD LAY WITH THE WEIGHT OF A MOUNTAIN ON HIM... BREATH, LIKE LIFE, SQUEEZING OUT OF HIS NUMB BODY... THROUGH BLURRED, TORTURED EYES, HE SENSED A DARK FIGURE DISMOUNTING, MOVING NEARER...

AFTER... ALL... THIS...  
I STILL... DIDN'T...  
GET...

YOU COULD NEVER GET  
ME, RICKARD!

WHY...? WHO ARE...  
YOU...? TELL ME...  
PLEASE... I'M...  
I'M DYING...

OF COURSE, RICKARD,  
IT'S THE ONLY WAY  
YOU COULD FIND OUT...



...FOR I AM... DEATH!

LOOKS LIKE RICKARD  
FOUND A HOME ON THE  
RANGE... PERMANENTLY!  
JUST AS WELL, RIDING  
AROUND IN ALL THAT  
SNOW MIGHT HAVE  
BEEN THE DEATH OF  
THEM ANYWAY!  
HEE HEE!



# EERIE

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(all ads and letters pages removed)



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**20**  
**MAR.**

# EERIE

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IT IS  
IMPOSSIBLE TO  
ESCAPE FROM US!  
SO PREPARE  
YOURSELF FOR...



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**THE FALL OF THE**  
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